

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 759

By Hood

A RESOLUTION recognizing the thirtieth anniversary of The Tennessee Child Passenger Protection Act of 1977.

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee has a long and storied history of care and concern for its citizens, from the very old to the very young, and is especially proud of certain pieces of legislation that have been enacted out of concern for the safety and well-being of Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, one such piece of legislation of which this Body is especially proud is The Tennessee Child Passenger Protection Act of 1977 which, when it became effective on January 1, 1978, distinguished Tennessee as the first among these United States to pass legislation requiring the use of child passenger restraints; and

WHEREAS, The Tennessee Child Passenger Protection Act of 1977, which required all children under the age of four in parent-owned automobiles to be restrained in an infant or child seat, arose from the committed actions of the late Dr. Robert S. Sanders, Chairman of the Accident Prevention Committee, member of the Tennessee Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and an official with the Rutherford County Health Department; and

WHEREAS, the act's origins lie with the Accident Task Force, established by the State Health Planning Council in 1973; the recommendations of the Task Force, made in April of 1974 with the unanimous approval of the Health Planning Council, called for legislation requiring the use of seat belts and child restraint systems; and

WHEREAS, though the act failed to gain the approval of the Legislative Committee of the State Health Planning Council in February of 1975, it did gain the endorsement of several medical organizations, including the Tennessee Pediatric Society, the Tennessee Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Tennessee Medical Association, the Tennessee

Trauma Committee of the American College of Surgeons, the Tennessee Public Health Physicians, the Stones River and Rutherford County Academy of Medicine, the Tennessee Committee on Emergency Services, the Tennessee Medical Association Auxiliary, the Physicians for Automotive Safety, and the Accident Prevention Section of the American Academy of Pediatrics; and

WHEREAS, John Bragg and Mike Murphy and Senator Douglas Henry introduced child restraint legislation before the General Assembly in 1976, but it was voted down by the House Calendar Committee on March 9, 1976; and

WHEREAS, its sponsors and supporters were committed to the importance of the legislation, however, and toiled tirelessly to bring it back to the forefront; their labors were rewarded when The Tennessee Child Passenger Protection Act of 1977, as House Bill 300, gained the required votes for passage in April of 1977; and

WHEREAS, upon becoming effective on January 1, 1978, the act became the first law of its kind in the country, a testament to the forward thinking and concern possessed by the members of the Tennessee General Assembly; the importance and timeliness of The Tennessee Child Passenger Protection Act of 1977 was reflected both by the adoption of similar legislation by many other states soon thereafter and, more importantly, by the fifty percent reduction in fatalities of children in this age group between 1978 and 1983; and

WHEREAS, by 1984, the other forty-nine states had followed Tennessee's example and enacted legislation requiring the use of safety restraints for children in automobiles; the increased use of child restraint systems resulted in a thirty-six percent decline on a nationwide basis of motor vehicle occupant deaths among children under the age of five between 1980 and 1984; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee has remained at the forefront of child restraint legislation and is currently one of only eighteen states that require children eight and younger or under forty-nine pounds to be restrained in a booster seat, a law which is second-to-none; and

WHEREAS, January 1, 2008, marked the thirtieth anniversary of The Tennessee Child Passenger Protection Act of 1977, a legislative success that is wholly deserving of recognition; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize the thirtieth anniversary of The Tennessee Child Passenger Protection Act of 1977, applauding its role in the protection of thousands of young lives and commemorating the act's landmark status and pioneering role in the passage of child restraint legislation throughout the United States.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.